Community college inspired hobby

Kurt Kramke earns MMR 287

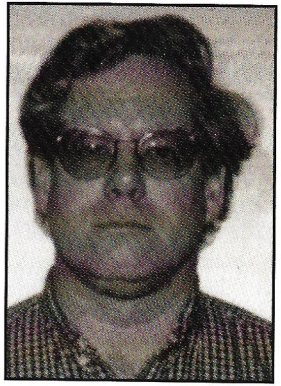
Kurt started in model railroading the way most do with a Lionel 0-27 set then into HO again with Lionel. After a switch to slot cars in the mid- to late-60's, he returned to model railroading when he got involved with a local community center when attending college.

After getting married, he started modeling in N scale including hand laying rail in 1975 prior to the availability of gauges. Kurt returned to HO scale after deciding that he was going to model the N&W before diesel's appeared on the property. The lack of steam locomotives in N scale also contributed to the decision to model in HO.

A job change and a move to the south shore of Massachusetts in 1979, allowed him to meet Robert Walsh of the South Shore Model Railway Club in Weymouth who convinced him to apply for membership. Travelling with a portable switching layout, Kurt met people in the NMRA and joined the division, region and national organization on the spot, becoming a life member the following year.

The first time he entered a model contest was with an FSM kit. He didn't get an award but it was a learning experience. In 1983, he entered his first scratch-built structure earning enough points for a merit award at the division show. Changes that were recommended by the judges were made and the model was entered at a region show taking first place and earning the new modeler's award. Kids and a move to Oregon, then to Utah put a hold on his modeling until 1995.

Rich Coleman's explanation of the achievement program inspired him anew to pursue his MMR. The construction of Kurt's layout has at the same time, made him a better modeler and allowed him to obtain certificates in the construction aspects. Combined with his years with the SSMRC he was able to earn his first certificate in civil engineering.



Kurt says: "My current layout is based on the N&W and features a loads-in/empties-out mine and power plant and a five-level helix to get from the lower level to the upper level. The track plan allows for the operation of long trains, also including switching areas, with the scenery the important focal point. I also have an American Flyer set from December 1948 that belonged to my wife's uncle and my son's G scale which will eventually be built outside."